

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program questions and answers



What is the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program?

You must meet the following criteria to be certified as a DBE for all Iowa federally funded contracts.

- ▶ At least 51 percent ownership of your business must be a socially and economically disadvantaged individual(s).
- ▶ An individual whose personal net worth exceeds \$1.32 million shall not be deemed to be economically disadvantaged.
- ▶ You, as a disadvantaged owner, must control and manage the firm's daily business operations and make the daily decisions.
- ▶ Your firm's annual gross receipts must not exceed the Small Business Administration's size standards in the firm's service area.

** Those individual(s) presumed to be socially and economically disadvantaged by the federal government include: Black Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian-Indian Americans, Asian-Pacific Americans, Subcontinent Asian Americans, Native Americans, and Women.*



Why would I want to be certified?

Certification is a way for your business to participate in the Iowa DOT's DBE Program. Certification gives groups that have been historically under-represented in the construction contracting industry a chance to work on Iowa DOT federally funded highway projects that have goal for minority or women participation.



How do I become certified?

To become certified, you must file an application with the Iowa DOT and go through a review process. The Iowa DOT decides whether you are eligible after a thorough review of your firm's ownership, control, financial and managerial documents, and whether you have the equipment needed to do the work of a given contract. As part of the review, Iowa DOT staff may visit your firm's office. Certification is reviewed annually.



Does a firm's DBE certification guarantee that it will be awarded contracts?

No, it does not guarantee work to a firm. The DBE Program is design to assist the development of disadvantaged small businesses, and to guarantee them fair opportunities to compete for Iowa business. To be successful as a DBE, you must sell yourself, your personnel and your services.



Where do I obtain an application?

For certification applications or additional information about the certification process, please contact the Iowa DOT's Office of Contracts, EEO section, at 515-239-1422. [Download the PDF application.](#)



How do I do business with the Iowa DOT?

The Iowa DOT has a letting every four weeks. Bids are due by 10 a.m. on the day of the letting. The letting is held at the Iowa DOT's Office of Contracts on the third Tuesday of every month except January when it is held on the third Wednesday. Contractors may keep track of the letting results on the internet or attend the letting in person.



Where can I receive DBE technical assistance?

The Iowa DOT can provide assistance to DBE firms. This aid may include:

- ▶ Assistance in the preparation of the certification application.
- ▶ Information about how to obtain bidding documents and plans.
- ▶ Assistance in reading plans.
- ▶ Assistance in dealing with contractors.
- ▶ Information about dealing with the Iowa DOT.
- ▶ Assistance in developing loan packages and financial statements.
- ▶ Assistance from our consulting firm when requested and approved.

Directory

A directory of certified DBE firms is published by the Iowa DOT for each letting. Only DBE firms listed in the directory are eligible for that letting. The directory lists company names, addresses, phone numbers, contact persons, and work type classification(s) of certified DBEs. The work types listed are not intended to limit your firm to only the work listed.

View by [name](#) or by [work type](#)

Other related links



The U.S. Department of Transportation's [Office of Small Disadvantaged Business Utilization \(OSDBU\)](#) offers financial assistance to small disadvantaged businesses by providing guaranteed loans through the Short-Term Lending Program (STLP) for transportation related contracts only. By providing loan guarantees small disadvantaged businesses can receive financial assistance for financing accounts receivable and other short term cost of performing transportation related contracts. To be eligible a business must be certified DBE or be a disadvantaged small business, or certified under one of the SBA programs.